

Grace Giving

Most people are aware that the tithe was instituted for the OT people of God in the Law. Leviticus 27:30, "*And all the **tithe** (*ma'asrah* - tithe, Old English for a tenth) of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord."*

Deuteronomy 14:22, "*Thou shalt truly **tithe** all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year.*"

The land, which God gave them to live on, plus the physical strength and mental ability, or talent, to work the land, which God gave them to do, equals the production of the land, which they were to take a tenth of that down to the priests, which functioned as a tax. Whether it was their crops, orchards, or livestock they were to take a tenth of that to give back to the Lord. Today our labor and mental acumen is converted into money, so we would take a tenth of that to give back to the Lord.

Failure to do that was considered robbing God. Malachi 3:8-10, "*Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In **tithes** and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the **tithes** into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it"* It was very similar to a tenant farmer relationship. God owned the land; they worked the land; and they were to return a tenth back to him for the operation of the spiritual found in the temple system.

But the principle of tithing a tenth was long established before the nation of Israel and the Law of God was set in place for we see Abraham giving a tenth to Melchizedek, who was the priest of God and king over Salem. Genesis 14:18-20, "*And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him **tithes** of all."* Hebrews 7:1,2,4, "*For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To whom also Abraham gave a **tenth** part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the **tenth** of the spoils."*

Abraham's grandson, **Jacob**, followed the same principle of giving back to the Lord a tenth of everything that the Lord gave him. Genesis 28:18-22, "*And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first. And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the **tenth** unto thee."*

But there is no NT passage indicating that we are under the obligation to give a tenth of our income; we are to give, but the requirement to give ten percent is found nowhere in the NT. It was codified into the Law of God under the Old Covenant, but giving is still applicable to all Church Age believers in Christ. Giving is still there and it is a function of the believer-priest that's why we call it **grace giving**.

2 Corinthians 1:11 - "Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the **gift** (*charisma* - a gift given in grace) bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf." - συνυπουργουντων και 'υμων 'υπερ 'ημων τη δεησει 'ινα εκ πολλων προσωπων το εις 'ημας χαρισμα δια πολλων ευχαριστηθη 'υπερ 'ημων.

2 Corinthians 9:6, "But this I say, He which soweth **sparingly** shall reap also **sparingly**; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." - τουτο δε 'ο σπειρων φειδομενωσ φειδομενωσ και θερισει και 'ο σπειρων επ' ευλογιασ επ' ευλογιασ και θερισει. To **sow** is the present active participle of *speirō*, which indicates one who does this willingly and does so as a **regular pattern** of their life.

2 Corinthians 9:7, "**Every man** according as he purposeth (*proaireomai* - perfect middle indicative telling us that the believer has come to a firm decision to give on a regular basis) in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity (*ananke* - forced to do it): for God loveth a cheerful **giver**." - '**εκαστος** καθωσ προαιρειται τη καρδια μη εκ λυπησ 'η εξ αναγκησ 'ιλαρον γαρ δοτην αγαπα 'ο θεοσ.

Ephesians 4:28, "Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to **share** (*metadidōmi*) with those in need." To **share** is the present active infinitive of *metadidōmi*, which is to share with someone by giving unto them what you have. To **work** is the present middle participle of *ergazomai*, which is to be actively involved with doing something with your hands. Working in our society is translated by exchanging labor for money, so money is a part of the equation. No stipulation of how much you get by working is brought in here. Some people won't work because they won't be paid what they want to get from their labor. Nevertheless, we are still commanded by God to work!

1 Thessalonians 4:11, "And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to **work** with your own hands, as we commanded you;" 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12, "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would **not work**, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they **work**, and eat their own bread."

1 Timothy 6:18, "Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be **generous** and willing to **share**." - αγαθοεργειν πλουτειν εν εργοισ καλοισ ευμεταδοτουσ εινα κοινωνικοουσ. NIV

1 Corinthians 9:11, "If we have sown unto you **spiritual things**, is it a great thing if we shall reap your **carnal things**?" - ει 'ημεισ 'υμιν τα πνευματικα εσπειραμεν μεγα ει 'ημεισ 'υμων τα σαρκικα θερισομεν. What this passage teaches is that there is an interdependence going on between communicators and those they minister to. Communicators minister to their people Bible Doctrine, which teaches them about the way of God and how to be blessed by God. In turn they are to receive from the people a small fraction back of the material things God has blessed them with. Communicators cannot invest their lives into education, training and work to produce the money they need to live on. And the people they minister to neither have the gift or training to come up with the doctrines they need. So each group is providing something for the other group. The one group receives things pertaining to the **spiritual life** and the other group receives things pertaining to the **physical world**.

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